

MONOLOGUE vs DIALOGUE

A Review of Manitoba
Government Communications

"People have the right to know and the
government has the duty to inform."

--Plagiarized

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

In a little more than two months of observation, interviews and searching for relevant details, it has been hastily concluded that the government of Manitoba, not suprisingly, sits upon vast amounts of information. The failure to adequately communicate that information drastically reduces administrative efficiency and dramatically deprives the citizens of enjoying benefits and services they have paid for with their tax dollars.

A Manitoba citizen trying to become and remain informed on government policy, activity and services would have to devote all of their time and energy to the process and even then would face considerable confusion. Assuming that that citizen could afford the luxury of trying to keep track of this government, he or she would get precious little assistance from the current Manitoba government in their task.

Obviously, the task itself is complicated by several factors facing all governments and all citizens. These factors are:

1. The competition with all other information generating sources;
2. The competing information from three political jurisdictions;
3. The media filter -
 - a) the mass media, the major conduit of government information, is first and foremost in the entertainment business and tends to make its news judgements on that basis, as well as immediacy, conflict and, on occasion, in owner-controlled self-interest;
 - b) much of the media is under-staffed to cope with the many facets of government activity; and
4. The government, as the result of its scope and breadth of involvement in the affairs of its citizens, often competes with itself when it comes to effective communications.

These five reasons complicate the job of communicating with the citizen and should not only be accepted in that light but also should provide the motivation for a planned communications strategy to minimize their affect on keeping the citizen informed.

An Historical Perspective

The most conspicuous reason for this government's failure in communications appears to be historical. No recent administration has tried to establish, either through policy or practice, effective communications.

Today, bad habits and negative attitudes permeate much of the political and bureaucratic thinking on the subject when, indeed, it is considered.

A communications inventory of the Manitoba government carried out by Douglas Smith in 1974, was titled an "Effective Conversation" but for all its impact on the government of the day, Mr. Smith might as well have talked to himself. Nobody appeared to have listened and the changes since have for the most part, been a worsening of what was already a bad situation.

Background to This Review

In fairness to all the players, including the authors, this review has essentially been conducted over a two-month period by one full-time person (Wepler) and two part-time people (Cohen and Bannister) and for that reason, if no other, it cannot be considered exhaustive. The latter two have drawn on their knowledge and experience of having worked within the Manitoba government for a number of years.

Comparative literature studied includes: the Fortier-Ostry (1969) federal communications study, the Eric Miller (1976) federal communications review, the Brown (1977) study of British Columbia Information Services, the Smith (1974) study of Manitoba Information Services, and Ontario (1977) study of the need for professional development for communications personnel, an Ontario (1976) study of cost-effective quick-print facilities for the government, the Watson (1982) study of the Communications Services of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, various professional and academic essays on government communications.

Two days each were spent interviewing and observing the senior communications personnel and their activities in the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments.

The review was undertaken with the understanding that there was recognition that all was not well with the communications capacity of the government and that there was a desire to find ways in which this capacity could be improved.

It was assumed that the current administration shared the premise that "people have the right to know and the government has the duty to inform".

At no point were the questions revolving round the "freedom of information" debate considered.

Some Definitions

Defining general information--as opposed to highly technical and legal information--that should be made widely public and upon whom responsibility should fall for communicating it to the public is complex and complicated for all governments.

For the purpose of this review general information has been defined as that which is necessary for the public to comply with provincial laws and regulations, to avail themselves of the programs and services and to have sufficient information with which to judge the effectiveness of their government.

Communications has been defined as the method used to deliver general information. It could include: public relations, community relations, speeches, seminars, public inquiries, lectures, ministerial statements, media relations, press releases, features, television and radio clips, fact sheets, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, books, reports, newsletters, signs, displays, exhibits, all-paid forms of advertising, photographs, films, video-tapes, video-text (Telidon) slides, audio-visual presentations, posters, T-shirts, novelties and all other forms of informational and promotional material.

Public relations has been defined as the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for communications through which a style and image is consciously projected.

Community relations has been defined as the establishment of a communications package to inform and to listen to a specific community on a specific subject.

Communications and Institutions--a comment by Eric Miller from his 1976 post-mortem on Information Canada:

"When philosophers and social scientists talk about communication they speak of senders and receivers, of messages and channels and feedback, of encoding and decoding and synesthesia, of a complex and organic process of environments and exchanges, of Harold Innes and Marshall McLuhan.

"When institutions speak of communication, they talk about getting the message across. If they were moved to invoke a patron saint, his name would be Dale Carnegie.

"That sort of wholesome, uncomplicated attitude is hardly astonishing in the case of most institutions. In the marketplace, for example, the objective is to sell at a profit. The means have tended over time to evolve toward cost-efficient, indirect vehicles such as the mass media. It is not communication but a sophisticated form of second-hand salesmanship: show-and-tell, not exchange; talking, not listening; monologue, not dialogue. The people who run the

marketplace, the producers and the retailers, deliver information in their own interest as economically and as effectively as they can as an extension of their role in the economic system. Their information is a valued convenience in making market choices; it is not crucial to the conduct of our society, nor does anyone really claim it to be.

"Governments are different. The things they do, the ways in which they do them, the decisions they make, the services they provide, affect the way we live in very basic ways. People actually need the information that governments generate, and governments have an obligation, freely and constantly stated, to make it available to them. As well, governments should know what the people are thinking in order that governments' laws and conduct can as accurately and sensitively as possible reflect the public need and the common will.

"And yet, governments persist in acting as if they were like other institutions. Aware of their obligations, even aware that there is a certain and continuing demand for much of their information, they still seem unable to take more than a one-way, arms-length, private-sector view of their communication relationship with their citizens."

SECTION TWO

Existing Central Services

The government of Manitoba, like all Canadian governments, has centralized some elements of its communications services, and like other governments, has achieved varying degrees of success in these activities.

Common to all Canadian governments is the Queen's Printer. The QP here was not reviewed in any other context than its role as a service providing section within the department of Government Services.

It has statutory and legal responsibility for all of the printing requirements of all departments and agencies of government. In that capacity it appears to be doing an excellent job of servicing all of its clients. So much so, that no one interviewed offered complaints concerning delivery.

On the contrary, given the vast number of people, with widely varying degrees of communications and printing knowledge, who requisition their services, often with totally inadequate information, it is amazing that they are able to perform as effectively as they do.

Their small staff deserve commendation for their patience, tolerance and helpfulness.

Very little of the vast amounts of printed material required by the government is internally produced. Most work is tendered to the private sector and given the large number of printing houses in Manitoba, prices are amongst the most competitive in Canada.

Much of the government's printed material is badly designed, artwork and layout poorly executed. But in no way can the QP be held responsible for this shortcoming. The sheer volume of work, their limited staff and the time-frame in which they are expected to work must all be considered mitigating factors. In addition, they have no recognized role as arbitrators of quality other than determining printing standards of contracting printers and, even here they can be thwarted by client departments asking for or being prepared to accept sub-standard quality out of ignorance, bad-planning or under-budgeting.

Time and limited expertise make it unwise for this review to be more specific in this regard. However, the fact remains that the quality of art, design and layout of much of the government's printed material is of a poor standard and steps should be taken to improve this quality, particularly since there are least 15 illustrators and other specialists involved in producing this material throughout the government. This subject is further dealt with in the section concerning visual identity and the logical jumping off point for improving these standards would be within the context of a visual identity program.

Information Services Branch

Of five Canadian governments reviewed comparatively, none employs a central news release service. Saskatchewan at one time employed a similar service but opted almost four years ago to having departments responsible for this function and their central information service acts as an editorial control point and dissemination centre. Like QP, ISB was only reviewed in the context of its client-service role.

In addition to news releases, ISB writes some ministerial speeches, letters of greetings, proclamations and a host of other odds and ends. It provides a radio news clip service, some television clips, coordinates news conferences and occasionally provides radio and television assistance to some departments. It also produces "Manitoba Facts" annually.

The director administers a small central photographic service and the central Citizen's Inquiry Service.

Its primary function is the writing of the majority of government news releases which are issued daily to the Winnipeg media and mailed each Friday to the 57 provincial weekly newspapers.

Releases are in the main initiated by ministers or as the result of selected Treasury Board and Cabinet papers.

Two critical problems have been identified with the system that has evolved over the years and no matter what steps are taken to improve this system, consideration should be given to correcting these two areas.

The present system tends to isolate mass media communications from all other elements of the communications package. By itself the press release or the radio clip is important in that it is usually the first step in public awareness of a new program or activity. But as part of a complete communications package it is, or should be, relatively insignificant unless it is combined with a series of releases and an on-going media relations campaign.

At this time this is not happening for several reasons unless it is initiated at the ministerial level. Rarely will a minister have the opportunity or the time to ensure the kind of continuity this type of media relations campaign requires.

It does not happen because ISB is not mandated to carry out the function. It does not have the staff to do so even if it wanted to and most departments have, over the years, forgotten or don't bother to worry about press releases because it is not their responsibility.

The result: many on-going and mature programs and services go unexposed to the citizen unless some crises, problem, negative media story or opposition criticism draws attention to the subject. And, then it is invariably in a negative context.

This is not to say negative stories will end if corrective steps are taken but it does mean that many excellent services and programs could be exposed in a more positive context. It means also that new citizens, or those finding themselves in changing circumstances could be made aware of a service or program that would be of benefit to them if they missed its announcement several years ago or forgot about it.

Even an explanation of how a new service or program meshes with existing programs is often not included in current ISB releases because of the brief style ISB has adopted.

In fairness to ISB, they will, and sometimes do encourage departments to submit press releases on such subjects, either on departmental stationery or Information Service stationery, but this happens haphazardly because many departments do not have the staff to prepare the releases.

The second area of serious concern regarding the current system of press releases is the manner in which it is accomplished and the damage it does to staff morale through short-circuiting of internal communications.

At this time, releases not originating with ministers usually are initiated from Treasury Board or selected cabinet minutes.

More often than not departmental staff, including many, and in some cases all, of the people responsible for delivering the program or service will find out about approval for a new program either by reading about it in newspapers or eventually by hearing about it when the weekly ISB information package finds its way into their section a week to 10 days after the announcement.

This is a comment, not on ISB but, on poor internal communications, which should be considered a management problem, and can be guaranteed to foster poor employee morale.

Much more serious than morale, people critical to actually delivering the service or program to the public are often left scrambling to find out what they should be doing or, worse yet, scrambling to prepare supporting information or services. This problem would be less serious if departmental communications people were involved in the planning process and had adequate staff under the existing system to prepare in advance. Neither, now, is the case.

It could be further mitigated if departmental communications staff were more closely involved with ISB releases or better yet, responsible for preparing the release in the first place.

When press releases go out without being part of a communications package as most now do, consequences can be quite damaging to government, departmental and ministerial credibility, especially if the release is premature in relation to the supporting information material needed to deliver a new program or service. Forms, booklets, brochures, advertising and other promotional material cannot be prepared with the simplicity of a press release. Many of these supporting items should have five to eight weeks lead time as a minimum. Some should have months of lead time and ideally most should be part of an overall communications strategy. This rarely happens now.

The central Photographic Services of ISB came in for considerable criticism from client departments and communications staff. Some of these complaints relevant to cost were unjustified.

It is our view that many of the complaints concerning quality had some merit and certainly some of the ISB news service photographs fell short of normal newspaper standards when considering composition and photographic editing (many were badly cropped).

The section appears to have old equipment and if they were to meet all of the assignment potential within the government they would need more staff. As it is now, a good deal of government photographic work is contracted out.

Alberta contracts out almost all of its photographic needs while Saskatchewan with a much larger and more modern photographic service is highly regarded by client departments and as a result meets almost all of the government's photographic needs.

The subject of photographic needs and services will be further dealt with in recommendations concerning audio-visual requirements of the government.

The Citizens Inquiry Service; appears to have been neglected in recent years and when its potential for conducting a truly effective dialogue between citizen and government is considered, it is a small group deserving of serious attention and immediate corrective action.

The three neglected areas: inadequate equipment and working space, poor wages and questionable job designations, and, totally ignored as a valuable source of information by all departments.

On the last point, criticism cannot be too strong. The inquiry service has had but one call in the last three years seeking greater explanation of what type of inquiry was being made concerning a specific department.

As a result of this neglect the inquiry service no longer keeps a substantially useful record of the type of call handled. It can tell a department, with great effort and considerable time, what departmental section a caller's question concerned.

The service has the potential of acting as a "sounding board" on public opinion and as an "early-warning" system for spotting program or service problems. It is not being used for this, promoted internally for this, nor is it adequately equipped to do this.

It should be.

While aware of how the service began in 1972, it is no longer staffed by students but by full-time public employees, most of whom are earning less than \$12,000 with a supervisor earning \$15,000. All are classified as clerks despite the fact that most are university educated and most speak at least two languages.

Working all day on the telephone at the best of times is a difficult job. Doing so in crowded and cluttered circumstances can only multiply that difficulty.

Thousands of pieces of information are manually collated, maintained and up-dated on Rollodex and flip files. The telephone system is rudimentary and even transferring some calls is complicated by lack of modern equipment.

Much self-motivation and initiative is found amongst this small, group who, essentially keep on top of changing information on their own.

The federal government obviously knows a good thing when it sees it and bought into the service in 1978. It gains much more detailed feed-back information from the system than does the Manitoba government and is quite happy to borrow the supervisor to advise and assist in training federal employees doing similar jobs.

It is strongly recommended that this service be quickly and seriously reviewed to take advantage of its potential and correct other problems mentioned.

Better pay, better working conditions and modern equipment should all be considered. Some form of computerized information scanning equipment should be considered and it should include at least limited capacity to record service provided.

In 1981, the inquiry service handled a total of 101,885 inquiries (63,795 provincial and 38,090 federal) an increase of 7,342 calls over 1980. There has been no recent promotion of this service other than to list the telephone number at the top of the Blue pages in all Manitoba telephone books.

Properly supported and properly used, a relatively small investment would bring almost instant pay-back and untold gains for all elements of this government. The public would be better informed and the government much better able to serve its citizens.

Advertising Audit Office

Advertising must always be considered a major element of any communications strategy or package because it is highly visible and unlike most other elements in a communication package, relatively expensive.

The Ad bureau is the only one of its kind in the six governments considered for this review. It should be highly prized not because it is unique or because it is a major money saver but because it is the key to good communications planning and executions.

The small staff is efficient and helpful and while some departments complained about some cumbersome procedures, most of these complaints usually led back to bad planning, ignorance of the advertising industry or a misunderstanding of why paid advertising had been chosen as means of communications.

The Ad bureau is essentially a media buying service but because at least its director, Marg Simons, has had long and industry-wide experience, they often act as consultants for client departments.

It is therefore, strongly recommended that immediate consideration be given to reviewing the Ad Office with a view to expanding its consulting capacity so that departments would be able to call upon their services at the earliest stages of communications planning.

The greatest weakness in departments at this time is that none have "advertising expertise" within their ranks. With one or two exceptions, no department could, under the present system, justify employing someone specifically to do this job.

As in so many other areas, the design, layout art and copy-writing of much print advertising is of abysmally poor quality, particularly that produced in-house. This is not, however, an area with which the Ad bureau has any mandate to deal. (The Advertising Advisory Committee is currently trying to cope with some aspects of this problem.)

Sign Service

The closest thing the government has to a central sign service is a two person operation within the Architecture Section of the Design Services Branch of Government Services. This group does not have authority for this function but has filled an obvious need for many departments.

In addition to designing and producing many forms of signs in-house, the service also designs and submits specifications for some signs to tender. It should be noted that the graphic designer in this group has developed a production system which has speeded up production of signs and at the same time saved considerable amounts of money.

For many years now they have struggled also to bring some semblance of visual identity and quality standards to government signs wherever possible.

It is recommended that further study be undertaken to give this group authority and control over government signs, preferably under a new visual identity program. Even if this step is not taken a better system with central control should be sought.

Central Cataloguing

If one is prepared to accept the proposition that there is no information without communications, the first step in communicating that information is being able to find and retrieve it.

For some years now, the Legislative Library has been attempting to catalogue and file, minimal copies, of almost all printed and published material produced by the government. Theirs has been a Sisyphean task, only recently and partially relieved by an Order-in-Council requiring that all departments submit at least six copies to facilitate this procedure.

By working closely with the Queen's Printer they had developed a cataloguing system but often found themselves without copies to file, unless they scampered about the city to collect the material themselves. That has at least been corrected.

Lack of support and tight budgets over the years have made it difficult for the Library to adequately record and publish their catalogue. Nevertheless this has been accomplished and annual catalogues are now available with monthly up-dates issued. The difficulty now is that inadequate funding and lack of support means that insufficient copies and unawareness of its availability continues to deprive the bureaucracy and the public of this invaluable tool.

Ideally, the Legislative Library should be computerized with suitable access for departments. Failing immediate action in this area, it is recommended that greater support and relatively small increases in funding be forthcoming to print and promote this service.

Missing Central Services

Having a central cataloguing service with library copies of all public printed materials is, in our view, essential. Equally important is having a central and public distribution point for much of this material.

Rarely does any government produced publication become a "best-seller" but many government publications would be in demand if their availability were known and most publications have an audience widely varying in numbers. As it is now, many useful government publications lie essentially undistributed because departments have inadequate systems to make these available to the potential audience. Even government employees are unaware of much that is published by the government.

Some form of a Government Book Store should be considered over and above the small facility operated by the Queen's Printer for a very limited range of publications.

Further investigation is needed, but included in that consideration should be some agreement with the federal government to also distribute many of its publications since no Winnipeg bookstore appears to carry a wide selection of its material.

It should be pointed out that when Information Canada died it unnecessarily killed the federal government's bookstores because the stores were multi-purpose with large staffs in high-rent, high-overhead operations unrelated to the actual distribution of the printed material available.

Audio-visual Services

All departments of government and most of its agencies require this service and with very few exceptions none can effectively or efficiently produce the material.

It could include simple overhead slides for an internal presentation or a highly polished back-screen display as a centre piece for a foreign trade exhibition. The audio-visual field is technologically a rapidly-changing and expanding communications field with unlimited applications.

A simple but effective slide and sound presentation, in competent production hands, can cost relatively little or, it can become an extravagant high budget spectacular. Both can be produced badly; cheaply or expensively.

What is critical in today's world when one considers production values is the exposure that any audience has to so many high production standards in commercial television. Content aside, most adults and all children have, at least subconsciously, acquired an awareness of high production values.

Esthetic values aside, the demand for audio-visual material within government is escalating; some formal system is needed to control cost, production quality and efficient distribution without unnecessary duplication.

While no attempt to carry out an inventory was conducted, members of the review group (Bannister in particular) have first hand knowledge of quantities of under-used, incompatible and out-of-date equipment already in place and constantly being purchased.

To avoid these wasteful purchases and to assist in production skills and techniques, it is recommended that at least a small group from within government be assigned to undertake an in-depth study of this subject with a view to recommending central procedures and systems.

At the same time, the related but separate field of video-tapes should be reviewed under much the same guidelines.

The central photographic service in ISB should be integrated with this new central service.

Currently, production and purchasing of these two communications tools is as variable as potential applications. Queen's Printer, Advertising Audit, ISB, Government Services, the Civil Service Commission and the friendly amateur photographer down the hall can be involved. Equally as many private sector agencies can be recruited, hired, contracted--with or without tender--to produce the material if the client department doesn't strike out on its own.

It is a hodge-podge.

Another minor but useful central service that should be considered also is the establishment of a central cataloguing service for film, AV presentations and video-tapes to enhance internal and external distribution and to avoid unnecessary duplication.

A Critical Synopsis

The Government of Manitoba currently has five central communications services in place. In all but one case, they function independent of each other and isolated from departmental or central co-ordination.

ISB issues press releases approved by ministers but often with inadequate reference to departments and in the majority of cases without any recognition, through no fault of theirs of over-all communications needs.

The Advertising Audit Bureau has an excellent buying system but accepts questionable departmental advertising which, through no fault of theirs, is often not related to a planned communications package and in many cases is not the product of the departmental communications staff, if in place.

The Queen's Printer is required to accept all approved printing requests and does so. It delivers excellent service but it too watches unplanned, uncoordinated and poorly designed material cross its desk with no responsibility (and limited staff) for helping correct this situation.

The small sign team provides partial and successful service without mandate and with limited quality control. Some departments do their own thing.

The Legislative Library, working closely with the Queen's Printer, has successfully established a reasonably good cataloguing system for published printed material but lacks support and funds to make it a more useful service.

There is no central outlet for government printed material with the result that neither public employees nor the citizen is aware of much that is available.

Everybody dabbles in audio-visual presentations in splendid isolation, each creating their own production and purchasing system.

If nothing comes together as the result of these central services, where does it come together? Section Four on Existing Departmental Services also fails to answer the question.

SECTION THREE

Visual Identity Program

Visual identity is critical to an organization. It is a composite of public impressions. Through them a perception is gained and in turn, positive or negative feelings are formed towards that organization. For government, identity is critical. Its perception by the public determines its future.

Visual identity for an organization is all pervasive. It includes stationery such as letterheads and forms, printed matter such as promotional or information brochures, newspaper, radio and television advertisements, vehicle identification, office or door signs, building identification, and the uniforms worn by staff.

The use of symbols as part of a visual identity program is commonplace. Symbols say something about an organization. In recent years, governments throughout Canada have come to recognize the importance of a strong visual identity as a basis of their public communications. The provincial governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec as well as the federal government have launched major visual identity programs because of this.

Using a symbol or word logo is basic to visual identity. Through its coordinated and planned use, public perceptions can be built. However, such a program has impact only if it is applied consistently and uniformly. The association with the government must be maintained at all times and cannot be neglected. If neglected, the program becomes weak; the inconsistencies result in the message or the credit for activity being lost. This is the case with Manitoba's present visual identity. Because there is no planned program and no policy basis for the use of existing means of identification, the Province's visual identity is weak.

The existing provincial logo (exemplified below) has been in use for about 10 years. By design, it is regarded as weak and difficult to read. It features the use of the provincial shield in place of the letter "o" in Manitoba. This was an attempt to combine a wordmark and symbol together in one identification. Its introduction has not completely stopped the proliferation of branch or department logos. It has, over the years, generated considerable dissatisfaction amongst its users.

The "Manitoba" wordmark was introduced with only minimal guidelines. The Queen's Printer office has been responsible for ensuring its use. However, departments or branches have deviated from its use. Too often one may scan through newspaper advertisements, printed materials, signs or other mediums and find some other identification for a provincial government department.

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of Energy and Mines
Honourable D. W. Craik, Minister



Cut line: Examples of Manitoba
identification in printed
material. There is no
consistency.

MANIT^{BA}

For example, while the logo appears on most printed material, advertisements and letterheads of government, departments have also used branch logos or simply not used the wordmark. Instead, on occasion, the provincial crest and the department name has been used. In large part, this is because the application of the wordmark has not been well defined or monitored. Further, it was never authorized by Cabinet or Treasury Board.

Government signs does not include use of the present wordmark. The Department of Government Services on its own initiative has developed a program which features the provincial crest. However, there is no policy. The Department never obtained Cabinet or Treasury Board approval for their program.

The fact that there is no authority for the use of these identifications has resulted in departments or branches being able to develop their own identification programs. Emphasis has been often placed on department needs rather than a government identity. Because no authority or confirmed guidelines have been set down, the provincial government's identity is weak and what is used is applied inconsistently. As a case in point, there are 13 different lapel pins which are available for distribution. Also, there is no guideline for the inclusion of Minister's names, so they do not always appear with advertisements or brochures.

Manitoba has a weak visual identity. A visual identity program is required which will convey a strong provincial image and have a recognition factor. This will require a provincial logo featuring both a readable and distinct symbol and wordmark. It must identify Manitoba in a positive, precise and clearly readable fashion. Its implementation must be well planned. In addition, through a visual identity program, standards of quality control may be established and maintained for the application of the logo and also production of the creative art.

These advantages are not now available. Instead, because different standards and methods of identification are in use, identification is fragmented and there is no consistent government image. There is no unity of appearance in government ads, signs, printed materials, or other identification.

Implementation

The following steps are required in the implementation of a visual identity program:

1. An attitudinal survey should be developed which questions Manitobans on their perception of government. It would include a series of used and new symbols to test how people identify the government. Ideally, the new symbol should embody Manitobans' perception of themselves and their government.
2. Upon selection of a visual identity, a Visual Identity Office be established to monitor and coordinate the program's application and introduction. The office should be separate from the Office of the Queen's Printer. Its mandate would be responsibility for the visual identity program and for developing the guidelines and standards for the program. Departments and their branches directly involved in the preparation of communications material (i.e. Queen's Printer stationery, Department of Government Services signage, Department of Highways signage, all departments' communications branches) would be required to work with the Visual Identity Office to ensure that standards are conformed with.

In Saskatchewan, a three person office is maintained while in Alberta, one person is responsible for monitoring their identity program.

3. Cabinet and Treasury Board authority is necessary for the Visual Identity policy and the operations of the Visual Identity Office.
4. The Visual Identity program must be launched in a coordinated fashion and phased in over a period of years. For example, as stationery supplies are depleted, letterheads or forms using the new identity would be introduced. The Visual Identity Office would be responsible for coordinating this activity with support from the Office of the Queen's Printer and other responsible agencies.
5. The Visual Identity Office would be maintained indefinitely. The entire program could take from 5 to 10 years to implement.
6. The hiring of an outside consultant experienced in the introduction of Visual Identity programs may be advisable. It would be charged with developing an overall strategy for introducing the new program to both staff and the public.
7. That the Visual Identity program should initially involve all government departments, agencies, boards and commissions. Crown corporations which, for the most part, have developed an arm's length and visually independent identification from government, would be included at a later time, once the program is well established.

Conclusion

Visual identity is critical to government communicating with the public and to having its achievements recognized. Manitoba's existing visual identity is inadequate and weak. Its implementation has not been uniform or well coordinated and is incomplete. The following measures are recommended:

1. The Manitoba government launch a Visual Identity program featuring a new symbol and word identification. Its design would be based on the use of a survey to identify public perceptions and responses to a new symbol.
2. That an Office of Visual Identity be established to coordinate and implement a Visual Identification program. The Office would be responsible for implementing visual identity policy and would include informing printers, advertising agencies, newspapers, etc. of style guidelines.
3. That a consultant be hired, if necessary, to advise the Office on a strategy for introducing the new Visual Identification program to both staff, the public, and media agencies which would be involved in production work related to the application of the new visual identity.

4. That the Visual Identity program be introduced with the full support of the Premier's office and Cabinet.
5. That the introduction of the program commence only after standards and guidelines are clearly developed and enunciated.

SECTION FOUR

Existing Departmental Services

There is great variation in the departmental capacity to provide communications services. The surprise in this is the size of the departments and their relative capacity, for indeed, the three major line departments--Health, Community Services and Education--have what must be described as three of the weakest communications structures in the government.

There are nine departments (one of these is Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation) without any designated communications staff.

There are eleven departments and commissions with full-time communications personnel. The Manitoba Health Services Commission has had one person on term employment but the position will be terminated in July.

The most effective unit and the one carrying out functions in most aspects of communications is Agriculture. Historically, and across Canada, this is quite normal as the result of long-standing support for these activities plus the fact that in most governments their first attempt at organized communications had been in departments of agriculture.

One of the great difficulties for this review was trying to define the central departmental communications function as opposed to the communications responsibilities of public employees who also deliver services directly to citizens. While it can be argued all public employees fall into this category, the group which best pinpoints the problem includes agriculture reps, home economists, public health nurses, corrections officers and a variety of other extension officers.

In theory, many of these extension people should be delivering government information to citizens in ideal circumstances--conducting a dialogue, in fact. In reality, that does not always occur for a variety of reasons; many of these people have client specific problems to deal with, they have caseload problems or they may bring their professional bias to the process which can mean they are not promoting government services.

It has been impossible to conduct any assessment of many individual branch/section information programs. Some of these may well be successful, however, piecemeal in implementation. What all will lack, of course, is the elements of image and design cohesion that should eventually help the program, the department and the government.

Totally missing in this approach is planning, coordination and control, not to mention cost-efficiency.

Estimating total cost of expenditures for information and communications proved impossible in two months. Staffing costs are particularly difficult because so many non-designated people are involved. A minimum of \$10-million is spent annually ranging as high as \$20-million depending on definition. Accounting codes should be made more definite for future purposes, particularly printing, creative and production costs.

What is happening to make central departmental coordination of communications extremely difficult, is that people in charge of specific services or specific programs are developing and producing a variety of information pieces to meet their specific needs. In departments where there are no communications personnel, there is little choice. Other departments have not mandated existing

personnel to carry out the function or sections successfully argue that their needs are so specialized they must be produced by the section to ensure accuracy.

The information section of Agriculture has shown over the years that its communications staff can produce the department's information needs on any subject. A good communications staff should be able to handle any subject with technical and specialized assistance from the program managers.

Agriculture

This is a full service unit involving 16 staff, the largest "public" communications branch in the government.

It produces almost 200 print pieces each year, which in 1980-81 cost \$90,000 for printing. It produces a weekly half-hour television show for CKY and from this footage also produces three or four films each year. A variety of shorter TV clips for other stations are also produced.

A wide variety of radio clips are produced for 12 rural radio stations. Garden tips are produced for Winnipeg radio stations.

The branch is also operating a highly successful home study course in which several media are employed and registration fees charged. The registration for this service has been increasing along with the fee.

The branch is currently actively participating in a pilot project involving Telidon technology in a program called Grassroots.

It produces audio-visual material and still photos on quite a large scale. The branch maintains a distribution centre from which 547,000 pieces were distributed in 1980-81 and a film library from which there were 1,500 bookings in the year previously mentioned.

Total budget for 1980-81 was \$557,400.

The only area the Agricultural branch is not involved with is the marketing campaign undertaken by the branch of the same name. The communications branch should probably handle this campaign, if for no other reason than it would give the branch an opportunity to keep Winnipeg better informed of the role agriculture plays in the life of Manitoba.

The director of the branch appears to run a happy organization although the question of time for directing the branch must be raised in light of the fact that the director is actively involved in the production and airing of the weekly television show. This is an extremely time consuming undertaking.

Without field study, it can only be assumed that the branch is effective but there is considerable evidence that the branch is doing a good job. They have the advantage of a large field staff of Ag reps, home economists, crop specialists and 4-H reps who should provide a good distribution network and feedback on their work.

They have an added advantage, in that they know rather more precisely than most departments who their target audience is and can be selective in volume of production because of marketing boards which provide exact numbers in the various sectors of farming.

The branch has a large production element and fairly extensive studio and editing facilities. The review had no way of evaluating whether these resources and facilities are fully utilized or justified.

Civil Service Commission

This group has a half-time audio-visual person and recently employed an information writer. Most of their work is directly related to staff development courses undertaken by the commission.

The audio-visual person provides some consulting and assistance to other departments.

Oddly enough the Commission does not prepare the copy for employment recruiting in newspaper advertisements. These are written by the departments and the quality varies from terrible to fair. It is a problem that needs some attention as these ads are read by many community leaders and their quality can only have an adverse affect on the Manitoba government's overall image.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs

The information branch of this department is in transition as Environment has recently been split off and workplace health and safety added to the latter's responsibilities. The staff share quarters.

Consumer Affairs now has two people responsible for consumer information and the new rent control program. Over recent years the branch has had an operating budget of approximately \$55,000 for consumer protection activities.

It has as a result of this under-funding had to adopt low-profile activities in an attempt to reach the citizens of Manitoba. This profile has been so low that complaints handled by the consumers' bureau have been declining.

Literature produced has been minimal and in the main has meant up-dating and reprinting of material produced in the mid-1970s.

Despite the lack of promotion of the rentalsman office, inquiries to it have been on the increase.

This is a department whose services and activities should have a much higher profile and consideration should be given in the near future to accomplish this. Planning and higher funding will be necessary.

Consumer Affairs and Environment are two departments which have a relatively good working relationship with senior departmental officials, reporting to their deputy ministers and ministers. This working relationship is almost unique in the government and should be encouraged.

Environment

A relatively new communications group, it too now has a staff of two, and is developing programs to deal with waste management and health and safety. Again under-funding is a problem.

Economic Development and Tourism

This is the government's big advertising, promotion and exhibit spender. In 1980-81 the department spent a total of \$1.7 million in this area.

While there are seven designated communications staff, many more people in the department are involved in these activities. There is a distinct lack of coordination in the department's programs partly founded on the fact that Economic Development runs its own activities and Tourism its show. This is an example of similar problems in other departments which have been amalgamated in recent years.

If the department is to remain as a single unit, splitting the communications function is highly questionable, particularly when within each division there are other programs which appear to have been partly hived off.

Planning for these relatively large expenditures leaves a great deal to be desired and while officers in the department have been working toward improving this process, more professional assistance might well be needed.

In many ways, this department should be the flag-ship of government advertising and promotion, setting the highest of standards and striving for a unified image. It is the main image-maker of the province outside our boundaries and the biggest advertiser internally, with relatively high budgets that should allow it to do quality work. Unfortunately, this is not now happening.

There has been some cooperation between Tourism and Natural Resources and Parks, which has been increasing its advertising expenditures to promote provincial parks. It is recommended that this separate promotion of tourist facilities be quickly reviewed with a view to intergration. Again cost-efficiency and quality could be better achieved if one agency were handling this subject matter.

Energy and Mines

The Energy section of this department is comparatively new and has already experienced a chequered history. Like other amalgamated departments its communications activities are totally separate from those of Mines.

Under the previous administration the Energy Information Unit performed other functions including the preparation of the advertising for the mega-projects.

It was well on the way to becoming a large and expensive unit. Today, with recent budget cuts, it has three communications personnel and is scheduled to handle some of the communications needs of the Crown Investments Department.

The department is one of the few departments which has a store-front information centre.

The Mines division has no staff designated to handle its communication needs.

Fitness, Recreation and Sport

There is one person in this department, working out of the deputy minister's office. The function is a mix of community relations (sports) and press relations, as well as speech writing and the preparation of a monthly newsletter.

Labour and Manpower

This is a department which has not had any full-time designated communications staff. It is a department that should have an on-going communications program for its variety of activities, all of which affect working Manitobans and their employers.

The one individual, who up until recently was attached to the minister's office, is now working within the department. Program directors are actively seeking out the assistance being offered.

Manitoba Police Commission

This commission has one information officer whose main function is the preparation and editing of a monthly magazine on law enforcement activities.

Manitoba Health Services Commission

This commission has had a term employee on staff for about one year but will not be renewing the contract.

The Health Commission has done almost nothing in recent years to keep the citizen informed on its services. The one leaflet seen by the review staff was the worst example of badly produced information found during the two months of study.

It was a cheaply produced pamphlet with about five folds printed in 4-pt type (newspapers use 9-pt) written in "bureaucratese". It is almost impossible to read with good eye-sight, a reasonable education and some understanding of the health system. Should an individual lack any three of these attributes the pamphlet would be of little help. Most of the people who would benefit from the information would most likely be old, ill, a new immigrant or poorly educated.

The pamphlet was only available on direct request from the Commission.

Natural Resources

This is a department which has undergone amalgamation and re-organization in recent years. It has not been an easy time for the department and its 10 branches.

These difficulties are reflected in communications practices and systems: they are fragmented and without coordination for the most part. The coordination is further complicated by the fact that some communications efforts are inter-related with the activities of other departments, notably Tourism.

There is a central communications group in the Administrative Services Division known as Public Information Services. It does not provide full service to all the branches, nor do all the branches like to use its services unless forced to do so. Indeed, at least three branches have extension officers who function as full-time communications staff.

There has been resistance, and it appears to persist, to centralization, at least as far as communications goes.

Two brief examples offer some illustration:

The recent introduction of the service known as "Dial-a-campsite" could have been a major embarrassment. The program, apparently conceived and prepared in Parks but to be delivered by Public Information Services, could well have been announced by the minister without PIS being aware of its role.

The chief of PIS discovered the program about 10 days before it was to be announced and had to then allocate staff and prepare informational and promotional material to deliver the program to the public. Given the system employed by the Information Services Branch and the fact that internal Natural Resources communications failed, the Minister could literally have announced this program without PIS knowing it was responsible for dealing with the public.

The second example has much more serious ramifications and may have already caused a serious public relations problem for the department and the government. While the subject might be considered outside the mandate of this study by some, it has been identified as serious enough to make it necessary to draw it to your attention.

The change of enforcing hunting and fishing regulations, as well as a myriad of other regulations, from low-key conservation officer visits to enforcement through the use of 160 uniformed conservation and parks officers appears to have been poorly planned.

The change might well be necessary and much more equitable for citizens but to spring another formal enforcement agency on the public without warning is unfair to officers and the public, particularly when enforcement had been spotty and interpretation variable for so many years.

It is strongly recommended that the department review the need for internal and external educational communications to avoid problems in this regard.

The PIS has three illustrators producing signs, artwork and layout for most branches of the department and acts also as the central requisitioning agency for services like the Queen's Printer.

The public telephone inquiry service of this department is a small but excellent service and could well be a model for ISB's central service in the way in which it uses the system to keep branches informed of the nature of inquiries.

Again, two junior clerks staff the phone service and when not on the telephone sometimes write ministerial speeches. Both have formal communications training.

Finally, this department provides an example of problems associated with the current system of disseminating information through ministerial press releases. A press release concerning the skunk population and its control at two resorts was issued under the minister's name.

An important item for several hundred cottagers and the 250 skunks killed last year but hardly worth the minister's identification when it is considered that scores of other releases of the same magnitude go out from this department annually.

The minister's important statements soon get ignored when the press release coinage is devalued in this manner. A much better system and valuable in terms of public education as well, would be to have the skunk control official release this information in his or her name, after ministerial approval, so that the cottagers know their interests are being looked after and so that the public is made aware of the department's capacity to handle the skunk problem.

The Big Three

The three line departments which affect the lives of all citizens more than any other government group are Health, Education and Community Services and Corrections.

Education has communications staff working in a totally uncoordinated manner. Health has communications staff providing internal and support material for extension staff. Community Services does not have any designated communications staff.

It is recommended that each of these major departments should seriously review and systematically set out to improve their capacity to communicate with Manitobans.

While attitudes may be changing now, each of these departments has suffered from what can only be termed as negative management practices and attitudes.

The following paragraphs on Education will hopefully illustrate part of the problem.

Education

In the last annual report for this department, the then Deputy Minister, labelled 1981 as the "year of New Directions" and said:

"Why, you ask? Unfortunately the query is well justified because as a department we are too tardy about telling our story and detailing the new directions and responses we make to ensure that the Manitoba student learns and develops the skills he or she must have in order to lead productive lives. Perhaps the problem stems from the low profile which has tended to characterize the department in recent years."

Doug Smith, writing in his 1974 review of government communications said:

"In the area of communications, Education is a barren wasteland."

Little has changed since 1974.

The only significant recommendation made by Smith which has been followed was the establishment of the magazine "EDUCATION MANITOBA", incorporating at least six departmental newsletters. It is published 10 times a year, at a cost of approximately \$46,000 a year and circulated to 17,500 teachers, educators and trustees. There are serious questions concerning this publication which needs review but could not be undertaken by this study.

The critical recommendation from Smith called for central planning and coordination of all education information activities with renewed efforts to communicate with the citizen.

If anything, the situation on which Smith reported has deteriorated. There is little evidence of coordination and certainly greater fragmentation of the production of information has occurred.

Delivery of some information has been enhanced in the community college sector as the result of relatively larger advertising budgets and in the Student Aid sector as the result of increased staff for direct community relations.

There are five identifiable groups producing different elements of education information for general public consumption:

1. The Minister through the Information Services Branch and speeches.
2. The information section of two which reports to the Director of Administration and Finance Division.
3. The Pupil Transportation Supervisor (School bus coordination) who organizes and facilitates production of an annual school bus safety campaign for about \$12,000 annually also in Administration and Finance Division.

4. The Student Aid information section which reports to the Director of Student Aid within the Program Development and Support Services Division.
5. The Community Colleges information group which reports to the Director of Administration in the Community Colleges Division.

The minister is the only individual attempting to communicate with all citizens and the entire spectrum of publics concerned with education. This would be a tough enough job if the minister was attempting to deal with only policy and major program changes. But because all divisions of the department depend on the Minister to move all "public" information not clearly identified as target specific, e.g. Community College courses offered or Student Aid information, there is a failure to deal with ongoing information needs, existing programs, promotion of public debate in non-crisis situations or provision of opportunities for the public to join policy discussions before critical decisions are made by the "educational community".

There are two main reasons for this "failure" to adequately communicate:

- a) the minister's office simply can't cope with this demand even if the department was able to funnel the information through; and

- b) there appears to be a lack of commitment at senior management levels to inform or involve the taxpayer and public outside of the narrow confines of the "educational community".

This lack of commitment to citizen involvement in education has come about for several reasons, including: lack of political commitment through a succession of administrations, poor internal communications and an apparent lack of division cooperation and, unfortunately, a "teacher knows best" attitude.

There are then a whole range of bureaucratic hurdles, some deliberately erected, others erected through habit or failure of internal communications.

Chief among these stumbling blocks is the attitude toward information personnel: They are too often seen as "juniors", their budgets are first targets for reductions, they are rarely, if ever, involved in internal policy discussions or communication needs, they usually report to someone who is neither interested in the problem of communications or, through no fault of their own, not competent to deal with the subject.

One of the senior communications officers described the situation as "working in a vaccum".

The officer said: "It is difficult to do your job when you aren't privy to the policy decisions."

On the question of departmental coordination, the same officer said that the deputy minister attempted to coordinate information efforts in 1978 but it failed because "people didn't want it to work".

Another senior officer confirmed the failure at coordination and described the attempt to produce an internal newsletter aimed at improving intra-departmental communications. "It", the officer said, "failed for lack of communications and the refusal of division and section supervisors to provide relevant information."

The newsletter "Ed News" died aborning when it was rapidly reduced to carrying social items rather than policy and program information.

There are many other branches and sections communicating with their various publics and, in the main, the information is of a "technical" nature. Much of it is designed for teachers or direct classroom application.

There are, however, several areas where mass communication could have and should have application. An example is easily found in the field of Child Development and Support Services. At this time the Department is conducting pilot projects with five school boards in a program of early identification of learning impairments and disabilities. The program as it stands now is dependent on teachers and a variety of printed material handed to parents of Kindergarten children. If the teachers are sold on the program and conscientiously participate and if the parents receiving the material are able to absorb and apply it, the program stands some chance of success.

The two "ifs", both acknowledged by a senior individual in the Directorate involved, raise serious questions concerning public awareness. The group does not have the resources to mount a campaign and because there has not been a habit or a practice of seeking expertise elsewhere, the public awareness element of an important program of this type is missing.

Taking the information component a step further, neither has there been the obvious inter-departmental collaboration on communications. Community Services and Health each have an obvious interest in the subject (neither have the capacity to conduct the kind of communications campaign required) and should ideally be involved in devising a public awareness campaign on the need for early identification of learning disabilities.

One of the largest group of communications-designated personnel are found in the Instructional Media Services of Education. Some 28 personnel of a total staff of 55 are so designated.

The branch will have an estimated budget of over \$2-million in the current fiscal year.

No attempt was made to study this section but it is recommended that the section be given close scrutiny. There can be no question of the need for the services it supplies but the question of how much and what should be produced internally is a valid question.

Similar sections have grown into crown corporations like Sask Media and Access Alberta because the cost of production equipment is unbelievably expensive.

Health

This department has no designated "public" communications staff but does have "health educators" and illustrators who do produce some material for public distribution--pamphlets and posters.

The home economists in the department also produce limited amounts of similar material.

The illustrators continue to do some work for Community Services and Corrections, without this capacity as the result of the split up of the department a few years ago.

In 1980-81, Health and the Health Services Commission only produced 11 pamphlets and booklets according to the Legislative Library. Most of these were in pre-natal, new child category and designed for point-of-service delivery.

The health education section operates a film library service.

Outside of a VD campaign, a limited dental hygiene campaign and a novel immunization campaign, there is little evidence of other preventive health material or campaigns in recent years. Total advertising expediting in 1980-81 was \$54,780 of which \$31,983 could be described as program advertising.

Despite these extremely low budgets David Robertson, the Health Education Coordinator in the Health Education and Professional Development section has initiated rather successful albeit limited campaigns. He has scrounged TV commercials from other jurisdictions, scrounged radio commercial production from non-union sources, and sold Reed Paper on free public service (immunization) displays for 2-million shopping bags, most of which were distributed in Manitoba.

The 1978 VD campaign drew wide attention (including the UK) and the most recent VD campaign aimed at teenagers drew 10,000 inquiries within a month for a total expenditure of \$15,000 on radio commercials.

Manitoba apparently spends less than any other province in Canada on preventive health campaigns. Saskatchewan spends more than \$2-million annually and the federal government will spend more than \$20-million in the next five years on just an anti-smoking campaign.

Given the high cost of health care and the portion of the provincial budget expended in this field, it seems totally unrealistic to spend so little on preventive health campaigns.

Community Services and Corrections

In 1974, Doug Smith said when writing about Health and Community Services, that it was only slightly better than Education in terms of its communications practices. Since the splitting of Health and Community Services, the latter department has suffered the most. So much so, that today Community Services does not have anyone identified with departmental communications.

The Administrative Director handles the paperwork involved in ordering a small amount of print material and a great variety of piecemeal advertising worth \$53,000 in fiscal 1980-81.

Information material is initiated by individual program directors and all appears to meet limited point-of-service needs. In the case of advertising, the vast majority of it apparently is announcements of local clinics and delivery of programs at the community level.

This department with 262 office locations throughout the province has an enormous internal communications problem compounding its external communications shortcomings.

It should be pointed out that much of the 1980-81 expenditures in this department were for the introduction of the CRISP program when over a 1-million pieces of print material was produced.

Departments Without Communications Staff

The following nine departments are without either educators, extension staff or communications staff:

Attorney-General

Finance

Co-Op Development

Cultural Affairs

Highways and Transportation

Municipal Affairs

Northern Affairs

Urban Affairs

Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation

Each of these departments use a variety of methods and personnel to accomplish part of their communications needs part of the time. The quality of the material seen clearly indicates the lack of planning and coordination and in some cases a total misunderstanding of requirements.

SECTION FIVE

Professional Development & Staff Training

This chapter cannot be meaningfully interpreted without due consideration for the following complex problems which are inherent in the communications industry.

Technological advancements, such as fibre optics in the telecommunications field, electronics in multi-image programming and micro-computers in word processing, although dynamic, have created their own set of problems. Most organizations are a minimum of five years behind these latest innovations and have not been able to attain their communications potential.

Current literature indicates that the full implications of future technology in the communications field has not been realized by organizations, or even, the creators of this technology.

Organizations appear to be struggling with the difficulties in systematically integrating present day technology, as well as developing their human resources at a comparable rate.

At the same time, communications personnel are faced with the growing need for organizations to communicate effectively to a larger, more widespread, and increasingly sophisticated audience.

It is generally recognized that communication today must be accurate, immediate, innovative, and effective. It must be unbiased yet interpretive, factual yet entertaining.

With these problems in mind let us proceed with a review of current issues revealed in a recent survey conducted with the communications personnel employed by the Government of Manitoba.

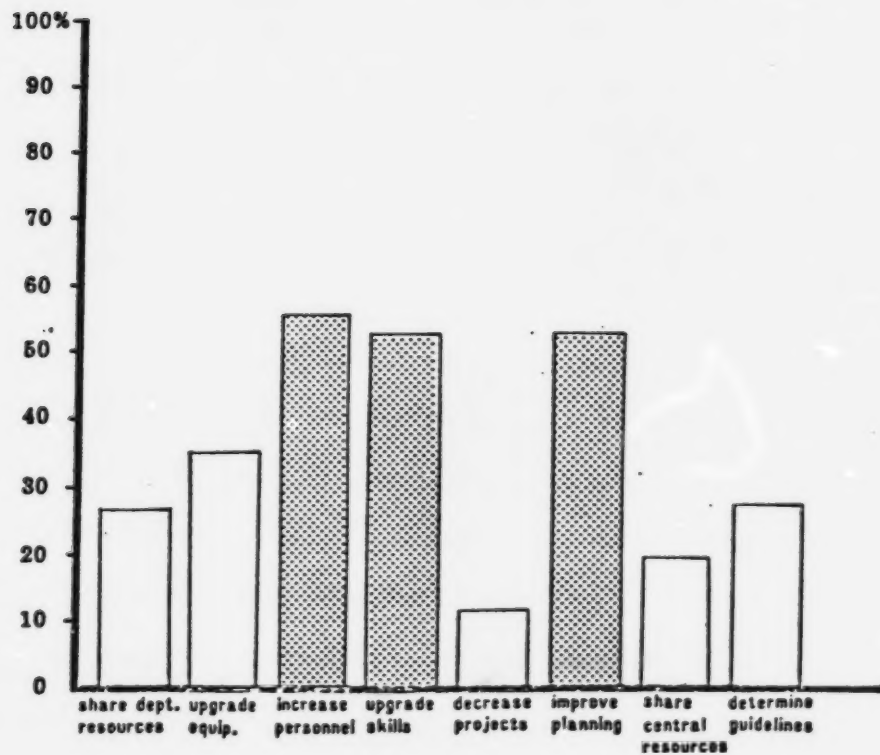
Background

In the last decade numerous reports have been compiled which have outlined the problems and detailed the recommendations for improving the quality of the government information and communication services. None of the recommendations in these reports identified professional development as having an integral role to play in providing solutions to the problems.

When the communications personnel group was questioned as to what could be done to improve the quality of their projects they responded in the following manner:

1. Upgrade skills and knowledge of the personnel.
2. Improve planning skills.
3. Increase the number of personnel.

NOTE: Other than to recognize the fact that shortages of technical and creative staff can and do effect the quality of government communications, this report will not pursue this particular issue.



Professional development in itself is not the panacea for all the problems which communications personnel may face. However, it can have some impact on the quality of the communication output.

Developing a plan for professional development requires the support, commitment and involvement of each department's executive, the managers of the communications function, as well as the communications personnel. It appears that the communication specialists have recognized the need for professional development but have also realized the role management must assume in improving the functions' efficiency and effectiveness. "I would like to attend 'courses in the management of media facilities and personnel (as well as) production courses...to keep...up to date in the field.' 'A general commitment from superiors to provide the type of resources necessary to the proper functioning of a production unit is also required."

This quote was taken from a questionnaire designed to identify current problems faced by the Manitoba Government communications personnel. (Please see Appendix I for a summary of the total response.) There was an 80% response to the survey. The information compiled from this survey has formed the basis for this report.

Generalizations of the problems are difficult to make because:

1. The communications personnel group is small in number.
2. Communications functions are diversified.
3. Individuals have unique specialized skills.
4. The group is decentralized.

However, the majority of problems exist in varying degrees throughout government.

The identification of problem areas and the need for professional development does not presume that the service is totally lacking in quality, nor that the people involved in this function are incompetent.

It is the image that is projected of government programs and services to the public which is ultimately the greatest concern to the communications personnel as indicated by the following comments from the survey.

Our work should be evaluated by the "effectiveness of information indicated by Audience awareness", "the response from the general public", "the effectiveness of the Communication...its impact, memorability, esthetic and production quality."

There are, however, three facets of professional development which need to be addressed:

1. Specialized Skills.
2. Management Skills.
3. Peer Group Interaction.

Review Findings

1. Specialized Skills

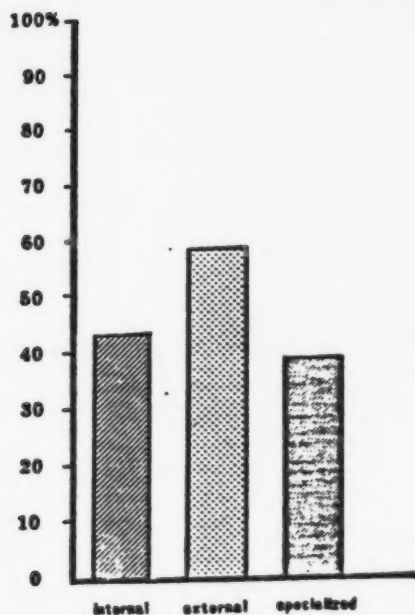
According to the survey 68% of the respondents have a university degree, and/or a college diploma with an average of seven years service in the Manitoba Government.

One could conclude from this that a reasonable level of competency already exists.

However constant demands for innovative and effective communications necessitate a continuing development of specialized skills. Individuals in the communication function require adequate opportunities to maintain and upgrade their level of expertise.

There is a definite willingness on the part of this group to participate in skill development. This is evidenced by the fact that since 1975, 83% of the respondents have attended job related courses.

According to the survey 58% of these courses were sponsored by outside agencies.



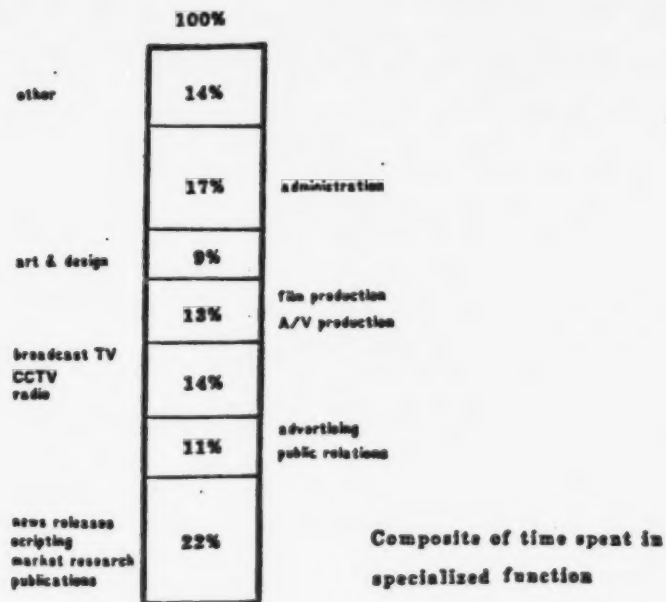
The fact is however, that this only represents 1.3 days of training per person per year over the last seven years. This could hardly be considered adequate in light of the changes in technology over this same period of time.

This funding along with the varied levels of expertise of the small number of individuals involved would require a careful selection of seminars custom designed to meet specified needs.

By reviewing the total communications output of the government it can be shown that there are many people contributing to this function whose expertise lies with some other profession.

In view of this, it is our opinion that if non-communications personnel are to be responsible for any aspect of this function they must be provided the necessary opportunities for skill development to ensure a quality product.

There are also individuals within the media related occupational group who perform some of the specialized functions without the advantages of training. The training requested through the survey was as varied as the areas of specialization in the communications function.



For a summary of course requests - please refer to Appendix II.

Further effort should be made to determine what courses are available locally and elsewhere, which could meet the expressed needs.

2. Management Skills

The Communication function is largely perceived as a reactive role. "Government information people are generally aware of the lack of communications planning; however, most concede that day-to-day activities seem to take precedence over long term planning."¹ This is because most departments think of communications as being the last step in a program. As a result, the function operates, in many cases, on a minimum output with the simplest methods employed to do the job, "...yet the branch...can supply little more than a news release, set up a news conference and call in the media for a general announcement. Rarely, if ever, can long range planning be done..."²

Survey comments indicated that the information and communication function, as with any other facet of the public service, requires long range planning and its personnel require direction and coordination to ensure that objectives can be met.

¹ An Effective Conversation, Douglas D. Smith, 1974

² IBID

"Improve management decision making skills...Branch management doesn't realize that policy decisions affect...content as well as program delivery." "Much of the onus for planning must fall on Branch Directors - they could make our job simpler if they were more familiar with the lead time required to produce public information programs and materials and plan accordingly."

In many cases departmental executives do not involve the communication specialist in the process of determining the department's communication problems.

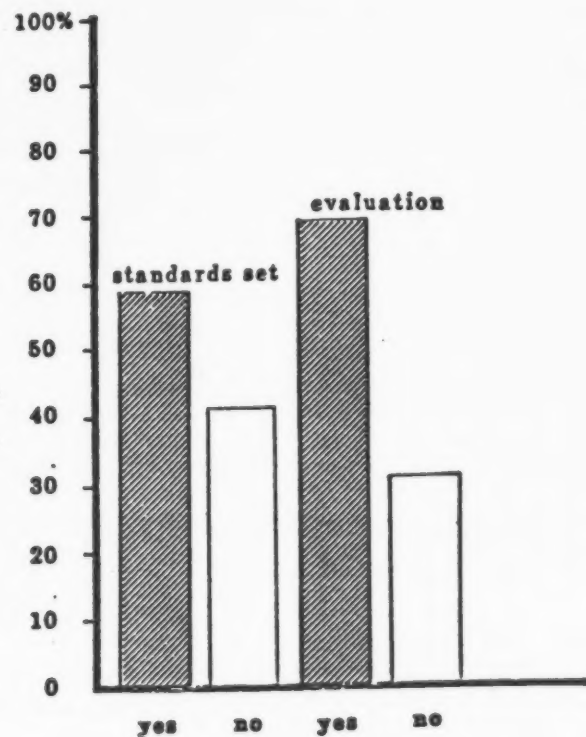
The planning which is done appears to be centred at the line management function, in many cases, without any departmental policy or input from senior executives.

It appears that long range goals are rarely developed with full participation and commitment from both levels of management.

It is important to develop communications strategies which are flexible enough to allow the function to react effectively to "crisis" situations and yet maintain a pro-active role in information dissemination. A survey respondent commented that more studying of the market was needed "to provide suitable material for specific outlets" and to provide a

"department marketing plan for day-to-day work." Another commented that their work was "very closely related to other staff priorities, abilities, and attitudes and we are all extremely subject to pressure of circumstances. The areas where quality is much affected will almost always be "response situations" unless planning can be improved."

70% of the survey respondents indicated that there was not adequate long range planning done for their branch. Although only 58% felt that standards had been set, 70% had their work evaluated by their immediate supervisor. This discrepancy raises a question about the criterion used in evaluating the communications output.



Although the survey did not ask respondents how they are evaluated 43% felt that their work should be measured on the basis of whether or not objectives were met.

Developing standards and objectives for evaluation are an integral part of the planning process.

Departmental executives and communication function Managers must be able to provide the necessary long range and strategic planning required to operate an effective, as well as, efficient service.

They need to be able to recognize the potential of the communications function as a valuable management tool and to utilize the variety of resources available to their fullest capacity.

The Development and Training Branch of the Civil Service Commission offers a variety of management courses which will develop such skills. Some of these courses could also be adapted to be more specific to the specialized needs of managing a communications function.

The creative and technical personnel involved in this function also require the necessary management skills in order to be more efficient in their particular job function.

According to the survey these needs appear to be already recognized.

91% of the respondents cited problems with deadlines as a major factor affecting the quality of their output. 60% stated that improved planning skills are required.

The Development and Training Branch has developed and offers courses such as Time Management and Project Management, which can meet these needs. Again, some of these courses could be adapted to be specific in dealing with communications related problems.

It is important to state at this point that even if the needs expressed for specialized skill development are met there would be little impact on the quality of output if management skills are not also developed.

(Please see Appendix III - recommended management courses).

A systematic approach for the development of senior and line management, as well as, the specialists of the communications function should be given serious consideration.

3. Peer Group Interaction

In any profession, peer group association is considered valuable because of the potential for exchanging information and knowledge.

In the Manitoba Government, the communications personnel are largely left to operate in a vacuum.

There is little interaction between departments therefore, there is limited cooperation in the sharing of human, technical and software resources. This results in the extensive duplication of these resources and an uncoordinated output.

A Media Advisory Committee was informally organized by the Manitoba Government media communication specialist in July of 1976. Its aim was to identify areas where cooperation and coordination of resources across departmental lines would minimize duplication and improve efforts in media communications. The committee provided a means for communication personnel to interact among their peer group for the purposes of evaluating presentations and exchanging ideas on production techniques.

Its last attempt to provide this service was December 12, 1978 where a list of activities and/or objectives were drawn up (Appendix IV) and January 1980 when the Media Personnel Resources Handbook was compiled and published.

However, the committee had no formal (government) recognition, therefore no access to opportunities to deal with expressed concerns about the structure and effectiveness of the communications function.

Many of the needs expressed through the survey could be met through the resurrection of this group.

The Media Advisory Committee could easily be given recognition as a government entity in order to provide a vital leadership role.

Summary

In the interest of brevity some of the data collected from the survey has been excluded from this report. Some of the data appears in summative statements.

Although the actual completed surveys will remain confidential and anonymous, all of the collected data is available for further review and/or subsequent interpretation.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that in order to develop specialized skills, Departments would:
 - a) Identify the specific courses their departmental communications personnel require.
 - b) Include these costs in the 1983-84 budget estimates.
2. It is strongly recommended that this report be submitted to the Director of Personnel, Civil Service Commission in order that a systematic plan may be developed in order to meet the expressed need for management skills development.

3. It is strongly recommended that the Media Advisory Committee be established as a legitimate structure within the system in order that it may:

- a) Identify areas where cooperation and coordination of resources would improve efforts in media communications.
- b) Provide a means for peer group interaction.

Implementation

The above recommendations could be implemented with provision of minimal resources in the form of staff and budget. Specifically this would mean in the first year of operation, the addition of half-time media staff person at the Civil Service Commission and an annual Media Advisory Budget of \$18,000.00.

APPENDIX I

SECTION A

1 Please list the job related courses/seminars that you have attended since January 1975.

Course/Seminar Title	Course Offered By:					Duration (Days)
	Development & Training CSC	Your Government Department	University	Community College	Other Specify	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total - 175 responses	☐ 30%	☐ 12%	☐ 14%	☐ 9%	☐ 35%	Total - 637 days

2 What job related courses/seminars would you like to attend?

Please see Appendix II and III

3 In which location do you work?

☐ 92%
Wpg

☐ 8%
Outside Wpg

4 How would you rate the opportunities the Civil Service provides for professional development?

very poor	poor	fair	good	very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8%	22%	40%	28%	2%

SECTION B

1 List any job related degrees or diplomas you may have received from a post - secondary institution.

68%

2 In your present position, how would you rate the opportunities to fully utilize your skills?

very poor	poor	fair	good	very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6%	11%	33%	29%	21%

3 How would you rate the opportunities provided in the Civil Service for your own career advancement?

very poor	poor	fair	good	very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14%	30%	32%	21%	3%

4 How long have you been employed as a Civil Servant? 7.01 Years.

5 Do you have any previous related work experience?
(Please Specify)

No Summary

6 How long have you been in your present position? 4.7 years

7 What is the present classification of your position?

(Group and Level) No Summary

8 a) Has your classification changed since you started work in the Civil Service?

yes

no

☐☐

63%

37%

b) If yes, was the change caused by:

☐ changed jobs

☐ transferred

☐ promoted

3%

23%

16% ☐ job responsibility changed

17% ☐ initial classification was inappropriate

☐ other (please specify) _____

SECTION C

1 In which Department do you work? No Summary

2 What is your Branch market/target audience? General Public

3 Who has defined the market/target audience for your branch?

46% ☐ Departmental Executive

21% ☐ Immediate Supervisor

3% ☐ ADM

30% ☐ Other

SECTION D

1 Which of the following best describes your immediate supervisor's working title?

20% ☐ Branch Supervisor

31% ☐ Director

34% ☐ Production Co-ordinator

9% ☐ Assistant Deputy Minister

2 How would you rate the long range planning done for your function in your Branch?

very poor	poor	fair	good	very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16%	19%	35%	24%	6%

3 Do you feel that standards have been established for your Branch's output?

yes	no
☐	☐
58%	42%

4 Is your work evaluated formally by your immediate supervisor?

yes	no
☐	☐
69%	31%

5 On what basis has your work been evaluated informally?

35% ☐ regularly	11% ☐ seldom
32% ☐ by project	6% ☐ never
16% ☐ random	

6 What criterion do you feel should be used to evaluate your work?

1. Meets objectives and is effective
2. Meets objectives
3. Project effectiveness
4. Effectiveness & Quality
5. Standards set by industry

SECTION E

1 How frequently would you say that the following affect the quality of the projects with which you are involved?

	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
- DEADLINES	40	24	27	6	3
- FACILITY	17	15	27	24	17
- EQUIPMENT	14	18	27	27	14
- OPERATING BUDGET	25	18	25	25	7
- POOR PLANNING	19	23	31	24	3
- PERSONNEL RESOURCES -					
- LACK OF PERSONNEL	20	24	26	16	14
- LACK OF SKILLED PERSONNEL	13	20	22	25	20
- OTHER	18	35	30	6	11

2 What can be done to improve the quality of the projects with which you are involved? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 56 ☐ Increase the number of personnel | 12 ☐ Decrease the number of projects |
| 54 ☐ Upgrade skills and knowledge of personnel | 54 ☐ Improved Planning Skills |
| 26 ☐ Sharing of Departmental resources | 19 ☐ Sharing resources from central agencies |
| 35 ☐ Upgrade equipment | 35 ☐ Determine guidelines |
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) 1. Improve Departments' planning skills
2. Support and commitment from Department Executive
3. Set priorities
4. Set standards
5. Crisis prevention

SECTION F

1 During the last 12 months, could you indicate the percentage of time spent by yourself on each of the following?

ADVERTISING	<u>3.74</u>
NEWS RELEASES	<u>8.61</u>
PUBLICATIONS	<u>11.15</u>
BROADCAST TV	<u>4.52</u>
CCTV	<u>4.18</u>
FILM PRODUCTION	<u>3.49</u>
SCRIPTING	<u>1.73</u>
MARKET RESEARCH	<u>1.00</u>
PUBLIC RELATIONS	<u>6.95</u>
RADIO	<u>5.40</u>
A/V PRODUCTION	<u>9.60</u>
ART & DESIGN	<u>9.21</u>
ADMINISTRATION	<u>16.99</u>
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	<u>13.39</u>

TOTAL 100%

APPENDIX II

Course Requests

Specialized

1. A-V Production
2. TV Production
3. Communications
4. Television Electronics
5. Film Production
6. Design and Illustration
7. Display Techniques
8. Audio Production
9. Advanced Electronics
10. Script Writing
11. Media Equipment Workshop
12. Written Communications
13. Speech Writing
14. Multi-Image Programming
15. Equipment Maintenance
16. Marketing Skills
17. Animation
18. Computer Workshops
19. Graphic Preparation
20. Print Media Workshops
21. Photo Journalism
22. TV Editing
23. Public Relations
24. Advertising
25. Campaign Design

APPENDIX III

Course Requests

Management Skills

1. Public Speaking
2. Production Management
3. Time Management
4. Administrative Skills
5. Training Methods
6. Information Services
7. Supervisory Skills
8. Communications Strategy
9. Program Development
10. Dealing With The Public
11. Management Development
12. Project Management
13. Modern Media
14. Conducting Meetings
15. Interpersonal Relations Skills

APPENDIX IV

Media Advisory Committee

Review of objectives:

Committee members took a serious look at the items prepared at the Dec. 12/78 meeting. The following list (still to be prioritized) is what the committee felt should now be considered as its objectives and/or activities:

1. Provide recommendations on equipment purchases.
2. Provide a vehicle for inter-provincial relations.
3. Encourage and provide professional development and training.
4. Provide non-media personnel with a media awareness.
5. Government personnel at senior levels should be made aware of importance of media and the media advisory committee.
6. Provide all government departments information regarding advisory nature of committee.
7. Document use of services by outside groups.
8. Act as a referral group for queries regarding media and media personnel.
9. Act as a software advisory body.
10. Develop an inter-departmental secondment policy re media personnel.
11. Act as a clearing house for outside media personnel who may be hired on contract.
12. Make known what resources and expertise are available and can be shared between departments.
13. Foster accountability and responsible use of existing media funds and recommend increases in funding where appropriate.
14. Do research regarding the effectiveness of media applications.
15. Encourage a decision regarding broad information access system.
16. Recognize media as a growth industry.

SECTION SIX

Towards Improvement

A great deal of lip service is paid to the need for communications throughout the Manitoba government. The first step in improving communications, thereby improving the delivery of services and the meeting of citizen needs, is to formally and administratively give it the priority and the resources to make good communications a reality.

Without cabinet commitment and will, no amount of tampering, re-structuring or money will achieve this goal.

The subject is pervasive to government activity, the problems universal to all governments, and the methods employed as varied as administrations and jurisdictions.

In structural terms there are four methods that can be employed by governments to deliver information to its citizens. These are:

1. Fully centralized, rarely attempted in western democracies and as shown in France a bureaucratic nightmare.
2. Departmentally based with varying degree of in-house capacity and few central services, usually Queen's Printer. Ontario and British Columbia are two Canadian examples.

3. Partially centralized services with departmental involvement. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta each have variations of this system.
4. Fully de-centralized, program based information units as in the federal U.S. system.

For the purposes of this review we have rejected the full centralized and the fully de-centralized system as too extreme.

Manitoba has a choice between departmentally based units or the partially-centralized system. Either could, at this time, easily be achieved without great disruption.

We have rejected the departmentally based system because it is expensive and by its very nature self-defeating in effective presentation of a government. Ontario openly acknowledges its problems with the system and the federal government has attempted, and, is still attempting to move to a partially-central system.

Our recommendations for structural changes then will revolve round adapting and improving the current system.

But before attempting to set these out there are several general recommendations that we hope will be seriously considered on their own merits.

First and foremost: the adoption of government communications policy, a realistic strategy and timetable to achieve these objectives based on a firm cabinet commitment to the process.

Section Five of this report dealt with the need to maintain and upgrade the skills of existing information and communication designated staff. At relatively little cost, taking steps to do this will pay significant dividends in whatever system is applied down the road. It will also enhance acceptance of communication staff as people qualified to advise superiors, a serious problem, not entirely deserved within the current structure.

Section Three dealt with the advantages to be gained by adopting a visual identity program. By itself this is an essential ingredient to developing a positive government image. Internally, it will provide useful guidelines and rationale for many of the changes that should be taken to improve the communications capability of the government.

The need to consider adding "advertising consultants" to the staff of the Advertising Audit Office is a recommendation we want to strongly underline. The Ad Office is and will be even more cost-efficient with this additional capacity.

It is important that its role vis-a-vis crown corporations and other government agencies be maintained. The question of all government advertising is a valid political question and will be even more so in the near future. The role and use of advertising by governments and their agencies is very much in transition, and the need to centrally direct, control and plan is not only responsible but also prudent.

Manitoba is truly fortunate to have already in place the mechanism to fulfill that function with the Advertising Audit Office.

Many departments currently do not have designated communications or information personnel. If a department can be justified, communicating information on its services, responsibilities and purpose can equally be justified. At least one person should be responsible in each department for advising, planning and expediting communications programs.

Finally, communications strategy and planning will only succeed when senior bureaucrats better understand the area. Beginning with deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers, one-or-two-day seminars should be undertaken along the lines of "Everything you wanted to know about communications but were afraid to ask."

All communications staff interviewed referred to the problem of management misunderstanding of the subject and all senior managers, including deputies and assistant deputies eventually identify the same problem.

Structural Change

One difficult policy question will nag the government for sometime, no matter what structural variations are adopted. There is the question of what and how much should be undertaken or produced by public employees "in-house" as opposed to purchasing goods and services "outside" from the private sector.

Many of the communications skills are considered creative, and in Manitoba, there is limited demand for these skills because so much of the private sector need is met from head offices in other markets. The quality of work currently being done in the government is as erratic as that being done in the Manitoba private sector.

Saskatchewan has followed much the same practice as Manitoba in that choices are made differently in each department, indeed in each branch. Some items are creatively designed and produced in-house, some designed outside and produced in-house, some completely done outside.

Alberta religiously follows a policy of purchasing all creative and design services from the private sector, employing only one or two "experts" in a central consultative capacity.

Alberta claims it has realized substantial cost and quality benefits. Certainly it has reduced the number of public employees working in the field and the quality of much of their information material is of high standard. Alberta, on the other hand, is a big spender on communications relative to Manitoba so that the cost efficient claim is difficult to judge.

Like the move to improve communications generally, it is recommended this policy question be resolved in an evolutionary manner.

Saskatchewan

Much of the system employed under the NDP in Saskatchewan is duplicated here in Manitoba with variation in method and success.

Departments all have communications staff but these vary in importance, size and role. Departments have more freedom in the systems employed to purchase or produce services than, in theory, is the case here.

There is no central advertising system and control of advertising was not effective but steps were being taken toward achieving some more formal structure to deal with this problem.

The equivalent of Information Services Branch provided effective editorial control while leaving initiation and writing to the departments, providing better coordination of communication packages.

Saskatchewan for the most part spends much more money in all aspects of government communications than is the case in Manitoba.

They have a strong, centrally controlled visual identity program which has been relatively successful.

Central signs and photographic services in the Department of Government Services were considered effective and efficient.

Audio-visual services were much like those found in Manitoba.

A council of departmental communication directors, convened by the Premier's deputy minister was evolving, through trial and error, into a coordinating structure of potential value. Their recommendation, if this method were to be adopted, was to give it a much more formal mandate from the beginning and much stronger cabinet support.

The equivalent of ISB, the visual identity program and one advertising coordinator were all part of the Executive Council with severe cost restraints forced upon this section for all the same political reasons faced here in Manitoba.

Over the years, Saskatchewan met with these restraints in part by hiving-off photographic services, reducing its writing staff and shifting it to departments, along with other similar measures.

The Executive Council communications director claimed that, in every respect but bureaucratic authority, having the communications function within the Premier's office was a serious limitation on effectiveness.

Alberta expressed the same view and moved its unit from the Premier's office to government services about three years after set-up.

In short, Saskatchewan has little to offer as a model for Manitoba. A stronger cabinet commitment, larger budgets and larger departmental units all have merit but do not by themselves lead to the coordination, control and cost-efficiency that should be found in adapting the Alberta system.

Alberta Public Affairs Bureau

The Public Affairs Bureau provides communications and communications production services to departments of the Alberta Government. It is a branch of government services.

Public Affairs Officers are assigned and paid by the Bureau to work with departments and agencies, to analyze communications needs and to develop and implement communications programs. Clerical support staff are paid for by the departments.

Communications programs, developed to help meet departmental objectives, are aimed at specific groups and may involve elements such as:

- public opinion or other research
- advertising
- meetings with specific groups
- press conferences
- audio-visual presentations
- displays
- information material such as news releases,
brochures, information kits and correspondence
- information prepared for internal use, in the
form of newsletters and in-house publications.

Public Affairs Officers are supported in the work that they carry out for departments and agencies by centralized advisory and production services, which include:

- communications planning and counselling
- research, editorial and advertising services
- printing services
- creative services
- display production
- photographic services
- audio-visual production services for
slide-sound presentations
- an audio-visual equipment rental service
- the Alberta Government film library.

Very little of any of these are performed in-house but rather are provided on a consulting basis so that departments have communications advisers, planners and writers only.

Few departments have as many as five PAOs, most two or three and several only one. There are 28 departments in Alberta.

Other services of the Public Affairs Bureau include a program of promotions and hospitality for journalists and others visiting the province, training in media relations, particularly in preparation for news media interviews, and a publications section which includes a bookstore and Alberta Government publications cataloguing service.

The Bureau maintains two networks aimed at improving communications between the government and the public. The first is the Regional Information Telephone Enquiry (RITE) system, which enables members of the public to contact the government - free of charge - from any point in Alberta.

The second network is the Alberta Communications Network (ACN) which transmits information from the government to media outlets outside Edmonton by teletype and mail.

The Role of the Public Affairs Officer

In cooperation with department staff, the Public Affairs Officer:

1. develops, implements and administers a public relations and communications program for the department.
2. coordinates and administers the department's public relations and communications budget (i.e. publications, advertising, displays, audio-visual, attitudinal and evaluation research, and other communications related requirements and materials).

3. provides consultant services in areas of public relations, advertising, information and communications to all divisions of the department, as well as agencies with which the department may work cooperatively or in a support capacity.
4. provides and maintains communication and liaison with intra and inter-governmental departments, special audience groups, news media and the general public as required for the department's PR and Communications program.
5. plans, prepares and distributes printed, audio-visual and other informational materials on departmental programs and/or sponsored activities.
6. arranges news conferences, media interviews, and public participation meetings, etc., involving members of the department.
7. develops and implements internal communications for the department.
8. maintains responsibility for all public communications including media relations, advertising, audio-visual production, displays, printing and graphics.

The Bureau also employs a council of communications directors or, in the case of small departments, senior PAOs, at which coordination, strategy, style and central direction can be achieved.

Departments maintain strong influence through total control of communications budgets in every respect but salaries of PAOs. According to the Bureau this is politically attractive for departments and ministers but can play havoc with central planning. However, over the past 10 years the Bureau has won most policy run-ins, usually without re-course to the Premier's office but has lost several cost and quality disputes.

There have been examples of "renegade" ministers and communications directors teaming up to beat the system at least once.

This is becoming less common and less likely as the Bureau moves into its "second-generation". The new generation of PAOs will be internally trained officers in what will become one of the strongest government communications organizations in North America.

This "apprenticeship" system that has developed over the past 10 years is one of the most attractive features of the Alberta Bureau. Almost no formal training or educational institution exists for government communications in North America. Much of good communications developed for the private sector is neither suitable to good government practice nor easily adapted to government structure.

Alberta is successfully solving that problem. They still find it necessary to recruit experienced staff and usually successfully raid from Ottawa or Toronto.

There are wrinkles still being ironed out in the Alberta system and minor re-organization is taking place. Essentially, it is staff lean in all but an administrative coordination unit that seemed from our brief review to be unnecessary.

It is recommended that an adaption of the Alberta Public Affairs Bureau be established as the mechanism to improve Manitoba Government communications.

Alberta and Saskatchewan experience has shown that it should be initiated and started from Executive Council but not maintained permanently in that department. Government services is the most logical department in that Queen's Printer remains a major and critical element of all communications programs and other central design and creative services could most easily be established as auxiliary sections within the department.

Initial planning and direction should emanate from Executive Council with the advice of a cabinet committee that could report to cabinet on a regular basis. At least three years should be considered essential for a transitory and evolutionary introduction of the bureau.

Few new staff man years would initially have to be created and may never be required if departments realistically acknowledged that many man years are now used to implement and deliver even the weakest communications efforts.

Transfers, re-designation and departmental redundancies could provide other sources of staffing.

Some limited outside recruitment might be necessary for highly specialized staff, particularly advertising "experts". These need not be all immediately recruited.

Close liaison should be established and maintained with employee unions and associations.

The variations and adaptations of the Alberta system are numberless and should be left to the cabinet committee and Executive Council to recommend.

Depending on how rapid implementation is to be undertaken will determine the additional staff needs of Executive Council.

Monologue vs Dialogue

Whether the government of Manitoba wants to continue an ineffective monologue with its citizens or establish an effective dialogue is purely a question of administrative will. The vast majority of public employees recognize the need and the advantages of a dialogue and are looking for direction.

One of the modern tools to establish a dialogue is survey research, which can and should be openly and publically undertaken. Results should be freely published and indeed form part of informing, explaining policy and educating citizens. Like so many other relatively new and expensive tools there are considerable advantages to having central coordination and planning of this communications vehicle.

Improving and expanding existing inquiry services has been referred to earlier and should also be considered integral to establishing a dialogue.

Establishing some form of the current federal Qualiserv program also should be considered.

Open government can only be achieved through effective dialogue. It will require creativity, commitment and courage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section One - Introduction

The task of communication is complicated by several factors facing all governments and all citizens:

1. The competition with all other information generating sources;
2. The competing information from three political jurisdictions;
3. The media filter;
4. The government, as the result of its scope and breadth of involvement in the affairs of its, citizens, often competes with itself when it comes to effective communications.

These four reasons should not only be accepted as complicating factors but also should provide the motivation for a planned communications strategy to minimize their affect on keeping the citizen informed.

The most conspicuous reason for this government's failure in communications appears to be historical. No recent administration has tried to establish, either through policy or practice, effective communications.

Today, bad habits and negative attitudes permeate much of the political and bureaucratic thinking on the subject when, indeed, it is considered.

Section Two - Existing Central Services

The Government of Manitoba currently has five central communications services in place. In all but one case, they function independent of each other and isolated from departmental or central coordination.

ISB issues press releases approved by ministers but through no fault of theirs, without adequate reference to departments and in the majority of cases without any recognition of over-all communications made.

The Advertising Audit Office has an excellent buying system but accepts questionable departmental advertising which, through no fault of theirs, is often not related to a planned communications package and in many cases is not the product of the departmental communications staff, where they exist.

The Queen's Printer is required to accept all approved printing requests and does so. It delivers excellent service but it too watches unplanned, uncoordinated and poorly designed material cross its desk with no responsibility (and limited staff) for helping correct this situation.

The small sign service provides partial and successful service without mandate and with limited quality control. Some departments do their own thing.

The Legislative Library, working closely with the Queen's Printer, has successfully established a reasonably good cataloguing system for published printed material but lacks support and funds to make it a more useful service.

There is no central outlet for government printed material with the result that neither public employees or the citizen is aware of much that is available.

Everybody dabbles in audio-visual presentations in splendid isolation, each creating their own production and purchasing system.

Recommendations

All press releases should originate within departments with ISB acting as editing and disseminating central agency.

Improvement of the Citizen's Inquiry Service should be undertaken by reviewing working conditions, equipment needs, pay scales and by better employing the service as a source of feedback information for departments.

An expanded consulting capacity should be considered for the Advertising Audit Office to assist departments in planning and preparing advertising.

A central sign service should be formally established using the informal team in the Architecture Section of Government Services as a start up group.

Stronger support and better circulation of the Legislative Library catalogue of government publications should be undertaken.

A government bookstore should be established.

An in-depth study of audio-visual needs should be undertaken with a view to establishing central services in this field, including the integration of the photographic service of IS.

Section Three - Visual Identity Program

Visual identity is critical to forming the composite of perceptions that determines the public attitude toward a government.

A visual identity program should include all stationery printed matter, newspaper and television ads, vehicle identification, signage and uniforms.

The existing "Manitoba" wordmark, in use about 10 years, is regarded as weak and difficult to read. There have been a multitude of deviations from its use.

Recommendations

A consultant be hired, survey research undertaken to assist in designing a new government symbol and wordmark to be introduced with a full-scale visual identity program.

An office of visual identity be established for the next five to 10 years to implement the program with the full support of the Executive Council and Cabinet.

Section Four - Existing Departmental Services

There are 10 departments and agencies without designated communications staff. Eleven with from one to 16 designated staff dealing with "public" communications.

The information section of the Department of Agriculture is doing the best job. The three major line departments--Health, Community Services and Corrections and Education--have weak or non-existent communications programs.

It has been impossible to conduct any assessment, in two months, of many individual branch/section information programs. Some of these may well be successful, however piecemeal in implementation. What all will lack, of course, is the elements of image and design cohesion that should eventually help the program, the department and the government to better serve citizens.

Totally missing in this approach is planning, coordination and control, not to mention cost-efficiency.

In departments where there are no communications personnel, there is little choice but a piecemeal approach. Other departments have failed to mandate existing personnel to carry out the function or, sections successfully argue that their needs are so specialized they must be produced by the section to ensure accuracy.

Any good communications staff should be able to handle any subject with technical and specialized assistance from the program managers. The packaging and production skills of a communications staff should be applicable to any subject and employed in the same way other technical expertise would be used to support any number of programs and services.

Recommendations

The Agricultural information unit should handle the advertising program of the Marketing Branch.

Tourism and Natural Resource advertising of park facilities should be integrated.

Natural Resources should consider an internal and public education program concerning its new method of enforcing resource regulations.

Health, Education, Community Services and Corrections should each conduct internal reviews of their ability to communicate with citizens with a view to improving this capacity.

Section Five - Professional Development and Staff Training

Rapid technological advancements in the communications industry have created problems for staff and management. Most organizations are at least five years behind employment of much of this technology.

A survey of communications personnel (80% response) identified a need to:

- a) upgrade skills and knowledge of personnel;
- b) improve planning skills;
- c) increase the number of personnel;
- d) improvement of managers awareness for departmental communications
- e) peer group interaction.

Recommendations

Departments should begin to identify training needs and plan budget expenditures for staff upgrading.

The Civil Service Commission should be made aware of these needs plus the need to develop related management skills.

A media advisory committee to facilitate peer group seminars and meetings should be re-established with sufficient funding.

Section Six - Towards Improvement

Improvement of the government's communications will begin with administrative will, support and resources.

Manitoba has a partially centralized information system with departmental involvement, one of four systems used, and considered through most experience to be workable and preferable.

Recommendations

Our recommendation for structural change will revolve round adapting and improving the current system.

Adoption of a government communications policy, a realistic strategy and timetable to achieve these objectives based on a firm cabinet commitment to the process.

Departments without designated communications staff should be directed to employ at least one person to handle these responsibilities.

Deputies and ADMs should become the first to attend a seminar on "Everything you wanted to know about communications but were afraid to ask."

An adaptation of the Alberta Public Affairs Bureau be established as the mechanism to improve government communications.

Initiation and planning for this new bureau should originate with the Executive Council and a Cabinet committee. Three years should be considered essential for a transitory and evolutionary introduction of the bureau.

Limited additional staff recruitment will be necessary while transfers, re-designation and redundancies should provide for most staffing.

Close liaison should be established with employee unions and associations for the transition period.

